

112TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
 1st Session 112-22

VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENTS ACT OF
2011

MARCH 2, 2011.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. UPTON, from the Committee on Energy and Commerce,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 525]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Energy and Commerce, to whom was referred
the bill (H.R. 525) to amend the Public Health Service Act to en-
hance and increase the number of veterinarians trained in veteri-
nary public health, having considered the same, report favorably
thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

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PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 525, the “Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011”, was introduced on February 8, 2011, by Rep. Tammy Bald-

win (D-WI), and referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The goal of H.R. 525 is to help increase the number of veterinary public health professionals.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Veterinary medicine is an important component of our public health system.¹ Veterinarians protect human health through early detection and response to disease events that can be linked to newly-emerging infectious diseases, such as SARS or West Nile Virus. They can also assist in the response to threats, such as the 2009 H1N1 (flu) outbreak.

There are critical shortages of veterinarians working in public health disciplines. A February 2009 report from the Government Accountability Office warns that “there is a growing shortage of veterinarians nationwide, particularly of veterinarians who care for animals raised for food, serve in rural communities, and have training in public health.”² Furthermore, the report states that the “veterinarian shortage is expected to worsen” even as “the demand for veterinarians is expected to increase.”

Section 765 of the Public Health Service Act (PHSA) provides authority for the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award grants to, or enter into contracts with, training institutions to increase the number of individuals in the public health workforce; to enhance the quality of the workforce; and to enhance the ability of the workforce to meet national, state, and local needs. Additionally, Section 776 of the PHSA supports public health professionals who serve in federal, state, local, and tribal public health agencies. While veterinary public health professionals are not excluded from participation in these programs, it is not clear their participation is permitted.

The House passed legislation similar to H.R. 525 in the 111th Congress (H. Rept. 111–634). No further action was taken on the legislation during that Congress.

HEARINGS

The Committee on Energy and Commerce has not held hearings on H.R. 525. However, the Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on similar legislation, H.R. 2999, in the 111th Congress on September 15, 2010 (H. Rept. 111–154).

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

H.R. 525, the “Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011”, was introduced by Ms. Baldwin of Wisconsin on February 8, 2011, and referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The bill was subsequently referred to the Subcommittee on Health on February 8, 2011. The Subcommittee met in open markup session to consider H.R. 525 on February 11, 2011. Subsequently, H.R. 525 was favorably forwarded to the full Committee by a voice vote.

¹ World Health Organization Study Group on Future Trends in Veterinary Public Health, Future Trends in Veterinary Public Health (2002).

² Government Accountability Office, Veterinarian Workforce: Actions Are Needed to Ensure Sufficient Capacity for Protecting Public and Animal Health (Feb. 4, 2009) (GAO–09–178).

On February 15, 2011, the Committee on Energy and Commerce met in open markup session to consider H.R. 525 as approved by the Subcommittee on Health. Subsequently the Committee ordered H.R. 525 favorably reported to the House by a voice vote.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list the record votes on the motion to report legislation and amendments thereto. There were no record votes taken in connection with ordering H.R. 525 reported. A motion by Mr. Upton to order H.R. 525 reported to the House, without amendment, was agreed to by a voice vote.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the oversight findings and recommendations of the Committee are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report, including the finding that there are shortages of veterinarians working in public health disciplines.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the performance goals and objectives of the Committee are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report, including the goal of increasing the number of veterinary public health professionals.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that H.R. 525, the “Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011”, would result in no new or increased budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues.

EARMARK

In compliance with clauses 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI, the Committee finds that H.R. 525, the “Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011”, contains no earmarks.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is the cost estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

FEBRUARY 25, 2011.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
*Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
 House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 525, Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Lisa Ramirez-Branum.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS W. ELMENDORF.

Enclosure.

H.R. 525—Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011

Under current law, the Health Resources and Services Administration is authorized to provide loans or grants to certain individuals or entities with the goal of increasing and improving the public health workforce. H.R. 525 would amend the Public Health Service Act by providing access to those programs for certain veterinary health professionals and educational organizations. The bill would allow entities that provide education and training in veterinary public health to apply for and receive grant assistance from the Public Health Workforce Grant program. In addition, the bill would allow certain individuals that will receive or have received a degree in veterinary public health to apply for and receive loan assistance under the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment program.

Based on the cost of changes in eligibility for grants and assistance in similar programs, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 525 would have a negligible impact on federal spending over the next five years; any additional spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting this legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

H.R. 525 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. State and local governments, including public institutions of higher education that provide education and training in veterinary public health, would benefit from expanded eligibility authorized in the bill.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Lisa Ramirez-Branum. This estimate was approved by Holly Harvey, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act were created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 designates that the short title may be cited as the “Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act of 2011”.

Section 2. Inclusion of veterinary public health in certain public health workforce provisions

Section 2 clarifies that “veterinary public health” professionals are intended to be included among the health professionals for purposes of two PHSA sections. The first provision, PHSA section 765, currently provides authority for the Secretary of HHS to award grants and contracts to eligible entities to increase the number of individuals in the public health workforce, to enhance the quality of the health workforce, and to enhance the ability of the health workforce to meet national, state, and local needs. The second provision, PHSA section 776, provides for a loan repayment program for public health professionals. Section 2 of the Act clarifies that veterinary public health professionals are considered public health professionals for the purposes of both PHSA section 765 and PHSA section 776.

Section 2 also defines “veterinary public health” to include veterinarians engaged in one or more of the following areas to the extent such areas have an impact on human health: biodefense and emergency preparedness, emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, environmental health, ecosystem health, pre-harvest and post-harvest food protection, regulatory medicine, diagnostic laboratory medicine, veterinary pathology, biomedical research, practice of food animal medicine in rural areas, and government practice.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT

* * * * *

TITLE VII—HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION

* * * * *

PART E—HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE

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Subpart 2—Public Health Workforce

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SEC. 765. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

(a) * * *

(b) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to receive a grant or contract under subsection (a) an entity shall—

(1) be—

(A) a health professions school, including an accredited school or program of public health, health administration, preventive medicine, *veterinary public health*, or dental public health or a school providing health management programs;

* * * * *

(d) **ACTIVITIES.**—Amounts provided under a grant or contract awarded under this section may be used for—

(1) * * *

* * * * *

(6) the retraining of existing public health workers as well as for increasing the supply of new practitioners to address priority public health, preventive medicine, *veterinary public health*, public health dentistry, and health administration needs;

* * * * *

Subpart 3—Recruitment and Retention Programs

* * * * *

SEC. 776. PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.

(a) * * *

(b) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to participate in the Program, an individual shall—

(1)(A) be accepted for enrollment, or be enrolled, as a student in an accredited academic educational institution in a State or territory in the final year of a course of study or program leading to a [public health or health professions degree or certificate] *public health (including veterinary public health)* or *health professions degree or certificate*; and have accepted employment with a Federal, State, local, or tribal public health agency, or a related training fellowship, as recognized by the Secretary, to commence upon graduation; or

(B)(i) have graduated, during the preceding 10-year period, from an accredited educational institution in a State or territory and received a [public health or health professions degree

or certificate] *public health (including veterinary public health or health professions degree or certificate; and*

* * * * *

PART F—GENERAL PROVISIONS

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SEC. 799B. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this title:

(1) * * *

* * * * *

(27) VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH.—*The term “veterinary public health” includes veterinarians engaged in one or more of the following areas to the extent such areas have an impact on human health: biodefense and emergency preparedness, emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, environmental health, ecosystem health, pre- and post-harvest food protection, regulatory medicine, diagnostic laboratory medicine, veterinary pathology, biomedical research, the practice of food animal medicine in rural areas, and government practice.*

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